

When a man is willing to set aside his pride and his ego and invites you to sit on the floor of his emotional cave, you do not resist. You do not hesitate...you do not say 'no.'

Dear Diary,

Sometimes, victims of violent crime would rather not have to tell their story repeatedly to every Tom, Dick and Harry. Sometimes, it is much easier for them to stay silent, keep a low profile and blend into their natural habitat like a wounded creature in the wild.

It is not always easy for a man to come forward and speak about his pain, in an open forum. Not easy for him to agree to share that pain with a stranger or even a familiar face. So, when that man is willing to set aside his pride and his ego and invites you to sit on the floor of his emotional cave, as he shares his heart, you do not resist. You do not hesitate...you do not say 'no.' As a matter of fact, you say nothing. You simply drop what you are doing, and like a good novel, you allow him to interrupt your life; make you cancel your appointments, skip a meal, or forget to feed the dog.

It is much easier to stay silent, keep a low profile and blend into their natural habitat like a wounded creature in the wild...

Truth be told, not only are men, more often than not, unwilling to talk about their anguish, many of them are equally unwilling to read about the anguish of others, even if it is captured in a good novel. They much prefer to wait for Hollywood to churn it into a blockbuster movie in '3D.' Even if this does not turn into a movie sequel, the hope is that, even if it helps one person...one man to understand and be encouraged...then this story, from a male victim's perspective would have been well worth the write.

Diary...

This is a true story, told by a male victim of a vicious crime...one of unadulterated pain, despair, guilt and unbridled rage. It is also a story that reveals the grace, mercy and restorative power of a loving and forgiving God.

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It was 7:00pm. My wife had just come in from evening classes she was attending, and was going back and forth to the house, taking stuff out of her car in the driveway. So the door to the house was open.

I was facing the doorway when the bandits first entered the house. I was so surprised to see these strange men standing in my living room, I automatically asked them, ***“What you all doing here?”***

They said, ***“Everybody down!!”***

Without a second thought, I immediately lunged at the bandit with the cutlass, as I realized that the other two were unarmed. My main focus was to get the weapon from this guy, so I struggled with him for a while. As I was almost about to prize the cutlass from his hand, the other two bandits soon realized what was taking place and jumped into the struggle. They began to kick and cuff me all over my body. They then proceeded to bite me on my knuckles, as I was still holding on tightly to the cutlass. When they bit me, was when I received the first chop to my head because all I know is that I fell to the floor. At the time, with the release of all that adrenalin, I did not even realize that I had been chopped on my head...it was only when I saw the blood on the floor. By this time, my face became so swollen that I could barely see through one eye.

I remained lying on the floor for what seemed like an eternity, so I did not know too much of what was happening to my wife. Afterwards, they brought her into the room where I was lying and I managed to see one of the bandits push her over the chair. It was at that moment that everything slowed

down...everything in my mind began happening in slow motion. I soon realized what was really going on. The most abominable crime was about to be committed...worse than being chopped in the head. ***Those bastards were going to rape my wife!***

Dear Diary...

How does a man react to hearing the news that his wife was sexually assaulted? Does he react any differently when he witnesses his wife being gang-raped by two bandits? And, is there any difference in his reaction, when he sees and knows that his wife is being violated by sexual predators, but he is physically incapacitated and unable to run to her rescue?

Diary...

I remember lying there, drenched in my own blood, hitting the floor with my fists and exclaiming,
“NO, NO, NO...Jesus NO!”

One of the bandits, on hearing my outburst and my prayer, jeered at me, saying:

“Yuh God cyah help yuh now!”

My military training and survival instincts kicked in at the same time. I decided to ‘*play dead to ketch corbeaux alive.*’ I remained motionless, while silently observing the bandits; looking for differentiating characteristics on them...any tattoos or scars that would help me identify them, later on. Of course, at the time, I just could not believe that something like this was happening to my wife. It seemed so surreal. It seemed also like a short while but it was in fact a lengthy period of time this all took place. They later headed upstairs to the bedrooms and stole our jewelry and everything else they could carry, including my new van.

Diary... Do you have any idea how that makes a man or a husband feel?

Now, I am sharing this after a couple years of counseling...I can now come out openly and say these things which were once agonizing thoughts back then. The initial feeling, as a man, is that I failed...failed as a protector...failed as a husband...I just failed. Failed with the security of my house, and my family.

It really took me into a perspective of “ifs.” If I had done this or if I had done that; if I had locked the door, probably, all of this would not have happened. This is how I felt back then, prior to the counseling... I felt inadequate. I had failed to protect my wife.

On the days that followed, there were lots of unanswered questions...why did I have to go through all of this in such depth? Why didn't they just come take what they wanted from us and leave us alone? Why did we have to endure all this physical injury (which, incidentally, caused more emotional damage than physical)?

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Following months and months of professional therapy, I can safely say that I no longer feel that way. It is no longer a series of painful questioning and ‘ifs’ or that foreboding sense of failure. I am now at a place where I have come to ‘understand’ why things happen in life. I may not agree with it...I may not even like it, but it is all about the fulfillment of purpose for our lives. I still have questions but I believe they are questions only God can answer.

Interestingly though, at no point did I ever doubt God...at no point did I say to God, ***“Away with you...Look what you allow to happen to me and my family.”***

Prior to this trauma, I had reached a level of understanding God, no matter what, and I think this understanding sustained me. This was undoubtedly the ultimate test in my life. I think if this had happened to me closer to the time when I had newly accepted Christ as my Saviour, I would have backslid. I would have doubted God.

I believe every person deals with trauma differently, regardless of their relationship with God. But I have come to a place with God where there is no mustard seed of doubt...only total surrender and trust in Almighty God. He has allowed this and now I am ready to unearth what was the purpose, so that I can move on and accomplish His purpose for my life.

This experience was very much a Joseph experience...from a pit to a palace. When you study the life of Joseph, he did nothing wrong...he did nothing to deserve the experiences he had throughout his life. It was not that Joseph experienced the wrath of God due to a sinful path he took or some poor choices that

he made. As human beings, we often think in those terms whenever something traumatic happens to a Christian brother or sister. We begin to question, analyze and even judge them. We think, *'maybe they were living a life displeasing to God? Maybe they were reaping the consequences of their actions.'* But in Joseph's life, there were trials from the beginning, until God placed him where he was destined to be. He never at any point cursed God. God showed Joseph that he would reach the palace, but at no point did God reveal to him that he would be sold by his brothers, end up as a slave and a prisoner, prior to reaching the palace. We must come to this level of understanding the God we serve.

This is the God they don't like to tell you about. This is the God, who not only supplies all your needs, but the God who carries you through a test to where He wants you to be. I have also learnt that these kinds of situations, it is not about 'you.' It's about your ability to help someone else.

Diary...

How did this experience translate now in terms of my relationship with my wife? How am I now able to relate intimately with my wife, after something this violent and disturbing has occurred?

I must admit, it was not easy at first. When I came out the hospital ten days after, there were no words. We just looked at each other, knowing full well that we needed help. At no point did I ever see my wife differently. I never felt like I did not want to still be with her. Initially, she was of the assumption that I did not know of the sexual assault. But she later realized otherwise. The truth is, rape is the ultimate defamation or violation of a woman's body and in like manner, the marital relationship. Based on the strength of the relationship we had prior to this incident, we have been able to rally through, despite the odds. My main concern was for her welfare and to ensure that she got the physical and emotional help she needed.

Diary... It had to be God.

For months afterwards, there was a silent, underlying anger raging inside me, even during the counseling sessions, which I have now been able to confront and address. I can only attribute this to Almighty God. I no longer desire them to be dead. God has helped me to forgive and to experience his love and healing.

The truth is God is Love and He loves the bandit too. We do not normally think of it from this perspective. God has instructed us to bless them, to forgive them and to not wish them evil. We've had to do that with all sincerity. Two years ago I could not have done that. It does not come from my own will, but it's God's doing. It takes a certain depth of understanding God to have a peace about such a horrible incident, without the need for revenge. There is no resentment or hatred towards them. God is so awesome.

God is a God of justice, but mercy triumphs over judgment...the same way He was merciful to me a sinner, I now have to extend that mercy to others who may harm me. It's been a hard lesson in forgiveness. People will not understand this unless they have a genuine relationship with the Lord. I highly recommend counseling though. Even though you may be spiritually mature, you will still need to address the painful emotions and allow the healing to take place psychologically.

After a traumatic incident has occurred, you may experience paranoia; you may profile all persons who look like the perpetrator; you may tend to become a recluse and to distance yourself from others. Those are the 'normal' things you do after such an 'abnormal' incident, until you receive counseling and begin the sojourn into the land of the 'new normal.' A place of progressive healing and timeless restoration.

You are never the same person you were prior to the incident...and that is OK. Not everybody will understand where you are now, and you may even lose a few friends along the way, but you can get on with your life once you get the professional help that is needed, and allow God to heal your wounds.

Thank God, I am now at the place of the 'new normal' and willing to help others get there.

... A MALE VICTIM'S STORY
(Transcribed from an Interview)

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